

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Joshua Goldberg on April 21, 2010.

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A method for combining a first material and a second material, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a first material, the first material being a functional material able to alter ~~the function of~~ property of or impart a property to a second materials;

(b) providing a fluid which is near or in the supercritical fluid state,

(c) at least partially dissolving the first functional material in the fluid,

(d) providing a second material, the second material being a bulk, matrix material;

(e) only subsequently incorporating the solution of the first functional material and the fluid into the bulk material to form a single phase solution from the first functional material, the bulk material and said fluid, and

(f) removing said fluid from said solution in order to leave the combined first functional and bulk materials, thereby resulting in a material having the function of altered or imparted property of the functional material.

Claim 9. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the processing is extrusion, or injection moulding, rotational moulding, blow moulding, vacuum molding or thermoforming.

Claim 22. (Currently amended) A method of combining a functional material and a bulk, matrix material during a polymer melt processing technique, wherein the functional material alters ~~the function of~~ a property of or imparts a property to the bulk material, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a fluid which is near or in the supercritical fluid state;
- (b) at least partially dissolving the functional material in the fluid;
- (c) introducing the functional fluid into polymer melt processing equipment;
- (d) separately introducing the bulk material into polymer melt processing equipment, the bulk material being in semisolid or molten state;

(e) incorporating the functional fluid into the bulk material within the polymer melt processing equipment to form a single phase solution from the functional material, the bulk material and the fluid, and

(f) removing said fluid from said solution in order to leave the combined functional and bulk materials.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Claims 1 and 23 distinguish over the applied prior art of record and over newly cited patents 6,828,363; 6,340,722 and 6,114,414 in view of recitations of the 2nd material being a bulk, matrix material to which the solution of first, functional material is incorporated by solution into the 2nd material. The previously applied prior art and newly cited patents instead teach 2nd materials which are incorporated into a first bulk, matrix material. Support for the amendments to claim 1 and 23 is found at page 6, lines 9-13 of the Specification; and support for the amendments to claim 9 are found at page 9, lines 2-6 of the Specification.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

JWD
4/26/2010
/Joseph W. Drodge/
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